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***TO LIFE!* RECEIVES STATE FUNDING AWARD FOR BREAST CANCER EDUCATION
PROJECT INVOLVING LOCAL MEDICAL CAREGIVERS**

Albany, New York (October 31, 2002): Reinforcing its commitment to improving women's access to comprehensive breast health and cancer awareness services, New York State has announced an award for **To Life!** – a non-profit provider of breast cancer education and support services for women and their families in ten counties in and around the Capital District.

To Life! is one of only four community organizations statewide to receive a *Breast Cancer Education Community-Based Demonstration* grant through the State's Health Research Science Board. Funding awards range between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The award, announced yesterday by Lt. Governor Mary Donohue, is earmarked for projects that seek to increase knowledge of breast cancer, encourage breast cancer screenings and promote healthy behaviors.

"We are honored to receive this grant and we are eager to commence our collaboration with Albany Medical Center and other medical caregivers throughout the Capital District," said To Life! Executive Director Thea Hoeth.

Specifically, this funding award will be used to develop and implement the *Medical Caregivers: Treating the Whole Breast Cancer Patient* program. The two-year initiative, as Hoeth explains, involves outreach to medical students, residents, physicians, nurses, student and practicing physician assistants and others about the psychosocial concerns of breast cancer patients and those at increased risk for breast cancer. These concerns include, but are not limited to, fear of illness and death, changing relationships, fatigue, genetic implications for family members and body image.

"Area medical educators have embraced our proposal and pledged their participation," Hoeth said, encouraged by the support To Life! has received from the health care community.

Dr. Jean-Claude Veille, professor and chairman of Albany Medical Center's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, will serve as Content Consultant for the project. Dr. Veille points out that a patient's quality of life and medical outcomes can improve with the inclusion of psychosocial supports in a treatment plan.

"It is important that health care professionals are equipped to recognize these issues and to raise them in timely and sensitive ways," he said. "To Life!'s project, in which Albany Medical Center is pleased to collaborate, will provide a complement to the training of our residents and medical students."

Other key personnel for the initiative include clinical psychologist and To Life! board member Lauren K. Ayers, Ph.D., Principal Investigator; Janet Dale Perloff, Ph.D., Professor, University at Albany School of Social Welfare and School of Public Health, Assessment Consultant; and Nola Royce, M.S., To Life!, Project Director.

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